

from everyone in every community as we work to create a new generation of American schools. And together, we are literally going to reinvent the American school community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, all across this country. You're showing us the way. You're leading. You're showing how we can break the mold, take our bearings by what works. And you're here today because you're not afraid to reach for excellence. And that's why I salute you all.

I salute winners like Julie Csongor, of Philadelphia—where's Julie? Somewhere, right there—who fled the persecution of her native Hungary, unable to speak English. And now she gives of herself to a generation of American kids. And listen to this; she says, "I have my cake in my classroom every day. This award is the icing." Welcome and congratulations. Well, I salute you, and I envy you. And you share in our kids' sheer joy of learning, of making something work, of understanding the world.

Think of the scientist or engineer who will one day discover the cure for cancer or who will use technology to push back the frontiers of space, maybe wipe out hunger. Today that man or woman is a student, maybe in your classroom. A kid who will catch a spark from you, a spark that will change his life, change her world. That's your gift. A teacher affects a lifetime.

I'm proud to be with you all here today because you demonstrate what it will take to make our students the best in the world. You encourage students by giving them direct hands-on experience. You foster curiosity not just in your students but also in their

parents and in your colleagues. You still have the joy of discovery, the excitement of optimism. And you still ask questions and try new ways. Above all, you believe in your students and in the future of this country. And that is the spirit we all need.

We all know the real rewards of teaching aren't their certificates that you received here, but they are something much more important. Sir Thomas More described it in the play "A Man For All Seasons." At one point, he suggests to a young man that he would make a fine teacher. "And if I was," the boy asks, "well, who would know about it?" And Sir Thomas replies, "You, your pupils, your friends, God; not a bad public, that."

Well, thank you all so much for what you do for the young people of this country. Thank you for your excellence. And on behalf of a very grateful country, let me just extend my personal thanks also. Keep up the good work and the good works. And may God bless you all. And now get out of this cold so you can thaw out. Thank you all for being here.

*Note: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Walter E. Massey, Director of the National Science Foundation; Dr. Eugene Wong, Associate Director for Physical Science and Engineering in the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the Executive Office of the President; and Julie Csongor, a geometry and calculus teacher at St. Maria Goretti High School in Philadelphia, PA.*

## Remarks to the National Conference of State Legislatures

March 12, 1992

Let me salute those who preceded me. I guess Dick—has Dick Cheney been over here yet? And Sam Skinner, our Chief of Staff. And then the piece de resistance, our fabulous Secretary of HHS, Lou Sullivan, who is, I mean that, he's just doing a superb job for the country. But I'm pleased to be

here. I remember last year being unable to show up. I think it was the aftermath of the storm, of Desert Storm. But I'm glad to be here, glad to see Bud Burke and Bill Pound and Bob Connor and Terry Anderson, just greeting us. And last year, I think I owe you an apology for that.

That Desert Storm, I think, was a triumph for our country. And I still believe that it holds an enduring lesson for how we in Government can get things done. It's different, but there's some lessons that apply. We saw a challenge; we met it with resolve. The subject, as you will recall, was debated vigorously. And our duty as Americans—I think the country came together, seeing that our duty demanded nothing less than the action. But when the time came to act, partisanship was laid aside, and we put an end to the squabbling. And the job got done, and Kuwait was liberated.

Incidentally, it is my judgment that that action, and I salute the people that participated in it, really restored credibility to the United States all around the world. I see it every single day that I interact with these foreign leaders.

So now I don't have to tell you all who are on the firing lines in your various States that we face a great challenge again today. We're in tough economic times. We owe it to our country to do all in our power to get the economy moving. I am not gloomy about that, incidentally. Retail sales figures today were good. We've got some fundamentals that are getting in place, such as interest rates and inflation, that could be the forerunners of a very good recovery. But we've got to do something. So I take this getting the economy moving very seriously.

I don't believe there's any one single magic wand that can be waved to accelerate recovery. But I also know that by taking just a few commonsense steps and taking them now, we can stimulate investment, help struggling businesses back to their feet, and put Americans to work.

And what will happen if we can do what I'm about to suggest to you, I think you're going to see a rapid restoration of confidence. One of the great problems we have in this country today is, even though unemployment, for example, is statistically far lower than it was 10 years ago in the recession of '82, the confidence isn't there. And I think that what I'm about to suggest would restore confidence if they saw that these things were going to be put into effect.

To free up investment capital, we've asked for a new investment tax credit. It's a tax allowance, really. And what it does

is speed up depreciation on the front end and would encourage, therefore, the purchase of new capital equipment, which obviously means jobs. I still favor, strongly favor, a cut in the capital gains tax. I think that would create jobs. And I also think that would restore confidence. We remember that both Houses had a majority for that, Democrats and Republicans supporting it a couple of years ago. We could never get it to a vote.

On the housing industry, and I'm sure many are familiar with this one, we've asked for a \$5,000 tax credit and that would be for the first-time homebuyers, and penalty-free withdrawals from IRA's for the first-time homebuyers. The homebuilders have enormously high estimates as to what the credit itself would do for the homebuying business. So I think these would have a stimulative effect.

When I submitted this plan to the Congress, I asked them, as you remember, to put aside the partisanship and try to get some action, pass it in 52 days. We set a deadline, March 20th. And so now we're back in the political wars, and they're fixing to send me a package that I simply cannot and will not sign. And there is a massive increase in taxes on that package. And I fully believe that a tax increase here would be a disaster for the economy. I think it would hurt our future competitiveness.

And I think that Congress—I don't think they will, but they ought not to doubt my resolve on this particular veto because if they send that tax-and-spend plan down here, I have to veto it, send it back. And then possibly in the Senate we can get action because some of the—I know we've got a bipartisan group here—but some of the Democrat incentives are very close to what we're suggesting here. And if we can narrow this package down and just go for the incentives, then when we get into all this campaign stuff, we can debate whether you need a middle-income tax or a tax break on the rich or a tax increase on the rich or whatever it is. So, I'm going to keep trying very hard to keep the focus on these incentives.

I know that you feel, and I know I feel, that people are tired of the business-as-usual

from Washington. And I know it's burdening some of your State capitols, too. In that area, business-as-usual, I'm talking about these unfunded mandates.

Every time I meet with the Governors or legislators, they say, "Please help us keep Congress from inflicting mandates on us. Give us the flexibility. We might have a better answer in Mobile than they do in Moline, so let us try it our way." And I understand what happens when an unfunded mandate drops in on you from Washington. You've got to find the money if you want to participate in it to pay for somebody else's wish list, either by cutting out programs that you have on the books that you feel might be better or raising taxes at the local level. In other words, Washington takes the credit, and you end up taking the heat.

And this message has been drilled home to me over and over again. And I think these mandates are irresponsible, and they cut right to the heart of the Federal system. So I've told the Congress if they pass a mandate, they just simply cannot pass the buck. They've got to pay for it without a tax increase.

Then there's one other front in our fight to restore federalism. More than a year ago—and I know you all have been helpful working with us on this, and we're very grateful—we proposed a \$15 billion block grant for the States because I believe that States are the laboratories of democracy. And you need and your constituents need the flexibility and the freedom to experiment, the freedom and flexibility that this grant would permit.

And the conference has been invaluable,

your conference, in helping get this proposal in shape. We introduced it last year, but we're going to be introducing to Congress soon, again. And I call on them to give it swift consideration.

The key, we all know this, is working together: Republicans and Democrats, the Federal and State governments, the legislative and executive branches. And I would be the first to confess that I understand the pressures of an election year. But we know what we can do in those moments when we can set partisanship aside. And I think that's what the American people are calling out for right now. And we must not let them down.

So, again, my thanks to you all for your support, for those of you who are supporting this block grant concept, helping us fend off more and more mandates from the Congress, and those who are with us in the idea that what we need for this economy now is something that will in a laserlike way stimulate an economy that is really ready to move and really ready to recover.

I really do thank you. And I hope this hasn't been too inconvenient, off and on again on the schedule. But I'm off early in the morning. And I just looked forward to having a chance to at least drop in and say hello. So thank you all very, very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 5:12 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to the following officers of the National Conference of State Legislatures: Paul (Bud) Burke, president; Robert Connor, vice president; William Pound, executive director; and Terry C. Anderson, staff chairman.*

## Message on the Observance of St. Patrick's Day

March 12, 1992

It gives me great pleasure to send greetings to all those who are celebrating St. Patrick's Day.

When we reflect on the extraordinary life and lasting influence of St. Patrick, it is easy to understand why the observance of this

day has become a cherished annual tradition, in the Emerald Isle and wherever the sons and daughters of Erin have made their home.

Although St. Patrick originally came to Ireland as a captive of pirates and spent six